



Zoning Bylaw Working Group

Date: January 6, 2021

Time: 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Present: Pam Heidell, Charlie Kalauskas, Christian Klein, Jenny Raitt, Stephen Revilak, David Watson, Ralph Willmer, John Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Absent: Mike Byrne, Adam Chapdelaine.

Guests: Eric Halvorsen, Emily Innes, Don Seltzer.

Erin opened the meeting by reading the preamble for virtual meetings.

The purpose of the meeting is wrap up the discussion on the industrial zoning project as the contract with RKG and Harriman has expired, and the staff will take over the project. Erin noted that the ARB indicated their interest in moving the project to Town Meeting in the spring during the meeting on January 4. The members provided the following comments.

Steve noted that the economic analysis portion of the project was insightful. He appreciated the use of bonuses and incentives to contribute to green infrastructure goals. He also noted that the industrial areas of Town are a very small portion of the tax base and land area, so redevelopment may result in a small return.

John referred back to Mr. Tosti's comments at the 2019 Town Meeting when the funding was appropriated for this project. He expressed that residential uses should not be allowed in the industrial zoning districts.

Ralph indicated that the project provided good information and proposals for consideration including modernizing the uses allowed and creating opportunities for sustainability and other amenities. He indicated that he is not concerned with allowing residential uses as it could encourage redevelopment without supplanting the industrial and commercial uses.

Charlie asked about the Park Ave area that is zoned industrial, in particular the site occupied in part by Gold's Gym. He was curious about redevelopment at this site. For this site in particular, residential uses may make the financial pro forma for this site work. Charlie also wanted to make sure that indoor fitness clubs would be allowed, and they are.

Pam recommended more narrowly describing what is permissible for residential uses. She appreciated the sustainability aspects and the inclusion of new uses.

David noted that the industrial areas are underutilized. By allowing more modern uses, the project moves in the right direction. He indicated that there may have been missed opportunities in the past which should encourage the Town to preserve what is remaining. The new uses can create new jobs and benefits for the Town.

Christian appreciated the new and interesting ideas, yet noted that the industrial areas are not in traditional industrial areas which might hamper redevelopment. He did not want to overemphasize residential uses, and also questioned what work will look like in the future, in particular establishments like Work Bar. The work that has been completed may create flexible opportunities in the future.

Erin noted that the inclusion of residential uses, as shown through the financial feasibility analysis that RKG presented at the December 21 ARB meeting, can encourage the redevelopment of stagnant uses to create more vitality in these areas of Arlington. The staff will take another look at the restrictions on residential in order to tighten it up. Eric and Emily did not have additional comments. They both thanked the ZBWG for their participation. Jenny also thanked the staff from RKG and Harriman and the flexibility of the ZBWG during 2020.

Charlie asked about why the Mirak site was not considered as part of the scenario review. The staff noted that the properties are owned by different Miraks and the family is not necessarily aligned on the future of the property. The 40B project was also moving forward at the time when representative sites were selected. Eric believed that the lessons learned at the Gold's Gym site are likely representative for the Mirak properties. Charlie also asked about the height bonus for biotechnology. Emily responded that it is possible that laboratory space with office space above could benefit from the height bonus.

Erin provided an overview of the zoning articles that were discussed by the ARB during their meeting on January 4. David, as the representative member of the ARB, suggested that the ZBWG could play a larger role in working with citizen petitioners in advance of the warrant article submittal deadline. There are examples from other communities where subcommittees work with petitioners in order to provide the technical assistance that may be necessary.

On the meeting summary from November 5, Steve made a motion to approve the summary as amended. Charlie seconded the motion. All members in attendance approved the motion through a roll call vote.

At this point in the meeting, the ZBWG members heard a presentation from Don Seltzer regarding the industrial study. The presentation was made available to the members and posted with the calendar event on the Town's website.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.